

# LEADERS HOPEFUL OF VOW SITE USES

T3/22/63

## Government Cooperative, But TNT Capacity Not to Be Endangered

Chattanooga leaders were optimistic Thursday after talks with government representatives regarding possible creation of heavy industry sites on the 8,000-acre Volunteer Ordnance Works property.

A spokesman for the Industrial Committee of 100, which was well represented in the Hotel Patten session, said the meeting could lead to further discussion toward a move to secure industrial sites on the large ordnance tract.

The meeting, billed as "exploratory," was organized in an effort to seek information.

Among those attending were Milburn Webb, representing the office of the assistant secretary of the Army; J. Gilbert Stein, general chairman of the Industrial Committee of 100, who presided; Floyd C. Delaney, president of the Greater Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce; Rep. W. E. Brock III; J. C. Miller Jr., Chattanooga contractor representing Sen. Estes Kefauver, who was unable to attend; and Ralph Kelley, Chattanooga mayor-elect.

### Second Session

The discussion followed a preliminary session two weeks ago in Washington with Webb and Chattanooga industrial and civic leaders.

Webb said that the government is willing to cooperate in the program, but said that anything done would have to be on the basis that capacity of the TNT plant as a whole will be maintained for use in event of mobilization.

Glenn D. Rucker, general manager of Farmers Chemical Corp., Inc., fertilizer manufacturer, represented his company, which recently moved into a portion of the VOW complex. The group was given a brief progress report concerning the operation of the association there.

Rucker said that a \$1 million rehabilitation project had been undertaken by Farmers Chemical since moving onto the VOW premises. The funds were spent on road repair, activation of electrical systems, water facilities and construction. He revealed plans to double the capacity of the plant in the future.

### Abandonment Unlikely

In answer to a question concerning the possible complete abandonment of the property by the government, one of Webb's staff representatives said:

"To abandon the facility would be to destroy the mobilization potential on which the armed forces depend. To build a new plant would cost three to four times the amount spent on the facility when it was originally constructed."

He said that there is little need to attempt to make the facility more modern. "TNT is manufactured today much as it was 60 to 70 years ago. It is not necessary to have a tremendous research program to find more economic methods in the field."

He also noted, when questioned regarding outright purchase of VOW sites, that any purchase would have to be on the basis of not injuring the mobilization potential of the plant.

Mayor-elect Kelley offered his "complete cooperation" in the project. "We're all here with one common purpose," he said, "to boost the economy by creating more jobs."

A spokesman for the Committee of 100 said, "we are pleased with the attitude shown by Mr. Webb and his willingness to negotiate a satisfactory arrangement."

## 200 ACRES AT VOW OPENED FOR SALE

T3/24/63

### Bids to Be Accepted Until May 1—Doubts Aired on Industrial Value

Two hundred acres of government property near Tyner, part of the former Volunteer Ordnance Works facility, will be sold on public bid. Rep. William E. Brock III has announced.

Rep. Brock said the General Services Administration has approved the sale of the VOW property for private use and sealed bids for the tract will be accepted by the GSA Atlanta Regional Office until 10:30 a.m. May 1. The bids will be opened at noon that day.

Brock stated the land is "near the 60 acres of land recently purchased from the federal government by the Hamilton County Board of Education."

### State Option Released

It became available for public sale March 7 when the state released its option on the property. The state had considered purchasing the tract for recreational use. Under the Surplus Property Act it could have acquired the land for recreational use at 50 per cent of the fair market value, a GSA spokesman stated.

The Chattanooga Industrial Committee of 100, in a statement Saturday, expressed doubts at the industrial development potential of the 200-acre tract because no rail or water facilities reach the area.

The committee said its industrial sites division inspected the land several months ago and at that time reported it possessed

subnormal potential for industrial use because of the lack of utilities lines to the area.

The irregular-shaped tract lies on the northern portion of the former VOW complex as it touches Highway 58, the committee's statement indicated.

While granting that the property as it is now could have value for purposes other than industrial development the industrial committee stated: "Unless utilities can be made available, the committee doubts its value for industrial development purposes."

Rep. Brock and Sen. Estes Kefauver are maintaining close contact with Army officials to determine whether additional acreage of the VOW facility can be released for private development.